

## **just like you** by CosmicDusty

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**Summary:**

Barb and you are best friends. Right?

## **just like you**

So far, you have done a piss-poor job of not falling in love with Barbara Holland.

You can't be in love with her, you know this, but your stubborn, stupid heart still insists on flipping its shit over the simplest things. You think her hair started it, soft and red, doing that cute flippy thing... your hand twitches as if to reach out and touch it, and just like that you're pulled back to reality.

"So I was thinking we could just go for dinner without Nance. Sound good?" You blink up at her and she raises her eyebrows. Your heart flips.

"Dude, seriously? Were you spacing out?"

You shake your head, shrugging. "Yeah, you caught me. I was stressing over... algebra. Sorry, Barb."

She sighs, then smiles. "It's fine. I said you and I should still grab dinner on our own. Nancy's going on a date with Steve Harrington."

"Again? I thought he would've been over it by now. Or that she would've wised up."

"Me too," Barb admits, "but they both still seem really into each other. You should've seen them at his party."

You nod, while wishing you could've been there just to see her.

After the final bell you catch Barb outside and walk arm-in-arm to the diner. You slide into an open booth -- annoyingly this is a popular after-school hangout -- and crack open your books to take out the weekend's homework early. You work over a basket of fries, helping each other with your weaker subjects. When you've both finished you treat yourselves to chocolate milkshakes.

With your lips puckered over your straw you waggle your eyebrows

at her goofily, and she playfully smacks your hand. You nearly choke on your shake when she rests her palm over your knuckles for a few moments extra.

Breathe, you command yourself. You're best friends, she's being friendly.

Her brown eyes are looking into yours and you clear your throat.

"Wanna sleep over tonight? Parents won't have any excuse if it's not a school night."

Her lips curl into a smile and she nods happily. "I'll grab pajamas from home and meet you."

"No need," you assure her, "I'll lend you some of mine."

God, what are you getting yourself into?

You're having heart palpitations. Barb is wearing one of your oversized t-shirts and a pair of little shorts, looking cute as can be. Both of you are a little sticky from the heat in your room, the warmth of summer not yet gone mid-September. A record spins on the player, pouring music into the room that just makes you want to dance with her.

She's leaning back against your bed now with her eyes closed, and you allow yourself to take in the swell of her chest, her soft belly, the curve of her thighs. Your cheeks are warm and flare up hot when her eyes open again. You try to look like you weren't staring, but she just asks, "Can you do my makeup? All I ever use is mascara."

Bad idea, bad idea, bad... "Sure, I'd love to." *Stupid*. You take out your powders and eyeshadows and lipsticks and lay them out on the floor. Barb kneels in front of you with her hands in her lap, patient. You scoot in closer, and start. You pat powder over her face lightly, and then blush. You lean in close for eyeshadow, and her breath fans across your cheek. You shiver. Next comes lipstick. Her lip part for you to put it on and you think it might be the last straw. You pause to collect yourself and then her eyes are open and you watch them

flick down to your own lips.

“Barb,” you whisper, before she leans in and presses her lips to yours. You kissed a boy once and he was rough and fast, but Barb takes her time with you and you love her for it all the more. She’s so soft, and so gentle, and when she guides one of your hands into her hair it’s all you can do not to fall apart.

“You were so *obvious*,” she laughs in a whisper against your mouth, and then you do pull back slightly, and you do start to cry.

“Woah, are you alright? I shouldn’t have done that. Any of it. I’m sorry. Please forget it happened. *Please*.” She’s pulling on her glasses and standing up but before she can make it to the door you catch her hand and squeeze it.

“Barb, it’s okay... I’m *happy*. Get back down here.”

And she does. And then you both crying in relief on your bedroom floor, so happy to be lucky enough to have found someone just like you. You didn’t even have to look farther than your best friend.

Later that night you sit on your roof hand-in-hand, watching the stars.

After a long silence, “I just love how close we are as friends. What a good friend you are.” You burst into giggles and you lean in and kiss her on the cheek, the nose, her lips. She smiles against you and you feel safe, and loved. You have done a piss-poor job of not falling in love with Barbara Holland, but you think that’s just alright.